

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL
2101 Constitution Avenue Washington, D.C. 20418

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DRAFT

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Subject: Inter-Academy Discussions on Biological Warfare

Gentlemen:

In the past the Committee on International Security and Arms Control of the National Academy of Sciences through a BW subcommittee and the Soviet Academy of Sciences through a specifically designated committee have carried out discussions on biological warfare. The last of these meetings was held December 5-7, 1990 in the United States. We have hopes that these meetings can be reinstated following the dramatic changes which have gone on in the interim.

There is, however, one matter which must be clarified in connection with planning for the future. It is well known that the 1979 anthrax epidemic in Sverdlovsk (now Ekaterinburg) was definitely due to a release from a military facility working on biological warfare activities, rather than caused by meat, contaminated by indigenous anthrax spores in the soil.

These recent revelations are of particular importance to our bilateral activities. For instance a special presentation was made to our meeting of October 1986 by Dr. Nikoiforov defending the contaminated meat description of the incident. Subsequently Drs. Burgasov and Nikoiforov visited the United States, not in connection with the work of our two committees, and publicly presented evidence again supporting the contaminated meat version. As the recently revealed facts now indicate, these presentations appear to be deliberate disinformation designed to cover the true source of the incident.

~~It would be helpful in the continuation of our meetings to receive as much of a detailed~~
This is a matter of serious concern, in particular since we had reached the joint conclusion that the only promising avenue towards verifying compliance with past and future arms control agreements in the BW field would be through collaboration and mutual trust among

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the international community of scientists expert in the BW field. Such collaboration should lead to increased transparency, information sharing, and establishment of common codes of conduct concerning the operation of biologically secure facilities. Ultimately it is the mutual trust among scientists in this community which is the basis for control. It is therefore essential to dispel any cloud which might hang over any of the participants of future meetings of the subcommittees of our two academies.

Any clarification or suggestions which you might give us on this difficult matter would be greatly appreciated.

With best personal regards,

Joshua Lederberg

and

Wolfgang K. H. Panofsky